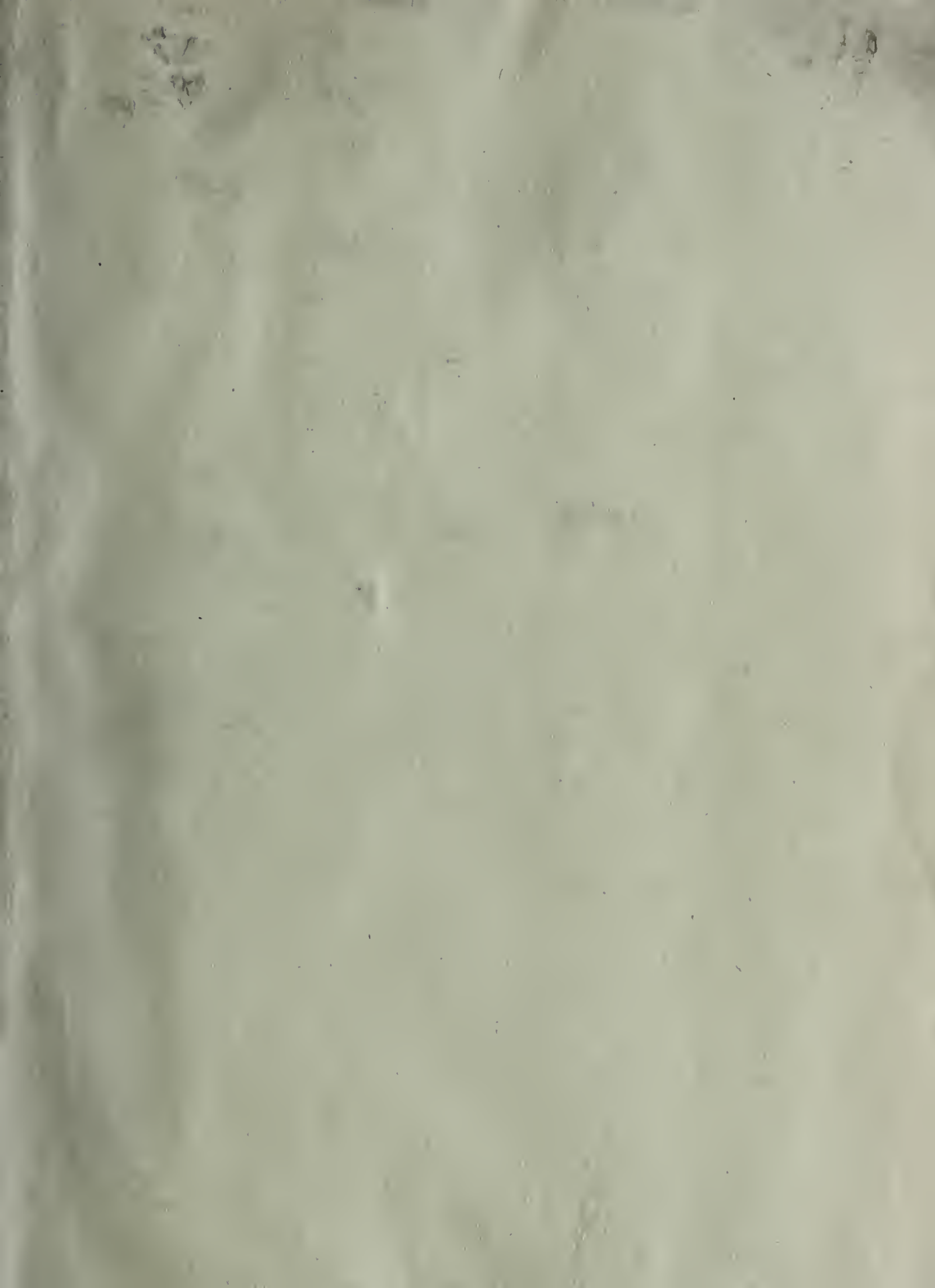




# REFERENCE



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# SULLIVAN REPUBLICAN

W. M. CHENEY,  
Editor and Publisher.

## HISTORICAL.

### Interesting Places and Neighboring People.

Many of the regular visitors at Eagles Mere and especially those who have their own summer homes here will doubtless be interested in a bit of historical matter with reference to the Eagles Mere of the past. We promise to give our readers in some future issue, a detailed sketch of Eagles Mere, covering its history for about a century.

Just below the outlet of the lake is the home of Mr. and Mrs. Peale one of the pleasantest places to visit in the entire region. The homelike farm-house and its quiet surroundings, sheltered from northern winds, is suggestive of the peaceful lives of its occupants. They were born in Old England and are fond of giving accounts of their childhood home in the mother country.

Having come to Eagles Mere over forty years ago they can tell all about the changes that have taken place on this mountain for almost half a century. Their very intimate relations with the family of Col. J. R. Jones and their knowledge of all that pertains to improvements and society here during the fifteen years that this was the home of his family will prove of interest to those who are curious to know how the life of Col. Jones was spent in his efforts to improve this section of Sullivan county. For a number of years the building now known as the Smith cottage was occupied by them and was the only dwelling-house in the immediate vicinity of the lake. They had full control of the entire property surrounding the lake after the death of Col. Jones. The hospitalities of the place were extended to all with a kindly hand, the remembrance of which adds a charm to this mountain resort. Many will recall the days when the Muncy and Towanda stage passed Eagles Mere three times a week, and the hospitable warmth and cheer so acceptable to its passengers extended by Mr. and Mrs. Peal, who for many years had charge of the post-office.

During all these years "Lewis's Lake"

had been a place of resort. Every nook and corner in the Smith cottage has had its occupant during many a rainy night, and when all the available space had been taken, many have found a comfortable night's rest under the hospitable roof of the "old stone barn" which was recently torn down and the material employed in building the Presbyterian Chapel on Pennsylvania avenue. The accommodations of the place were known to be limited and tent life became the practice of many who so much enjoyed summer life along the shores of the lake. Nothing was more delightful during the pleasant days of summer and early autumn, but when the north-west winds blew up a cold drizzling rain and the tents became water-soaked and afforded but slight protection from cold and rain, then it was that the kindly homes of Mrs. Peale and Mrs. Morgan would become the refuge of the many who were never refused any accommodation that could be given them. Later in the season the older men, who well remembered the place when occupied by Lewis and Adams, would come to hunt deer and bear which were then abundant in the neighboring forests, and were sure to find a warm, cheerful home where they could talk over their boyhood adventures in this mountain wilderness. Occasionally more distinguished guests would visit the lake. Among those worthy of mention was the nephew of George Lewis, who made his last visit here in 1863. During his boyhood he had made his home with his uncle but had returned to England when a young man. He came to America however, from time to time, always paying a visit to the lake before returning, and upon this occasion feeling that life's work and enjoyments were nearly at an end remarked that he must take his last long look at his boyhood home for he could not expect to see it again.

Among other distinguished men who enjoyed the quiet home of Mr. and Mrs. Peale nearly thirty years ago, was Dr. John Hall, of New York. At the same time distinguished members of his church found a home with Mrs. Morgan. This eminent clergyman would every Sabbath make his way to the little school house and join with the few devout worshippers then living here.

Many are the fond recollections that these early settlers are pleased to relate and fortunate are those who have had an opportunity of listening to the interesting story of their life's work on this mountain.



## BIOGRAPHICAL.

### Brief Sketch of Hon. J. R. Jones His Life at Eagles Mere Half a Century Ago.

Many of the numerous visitors at Eagles Mere are desirous of knowing something of its former occupants. Among those that are most noteworthy is Col. J. Richter Jones.

The writer first made his acquaintance during the fall of 1847, being at that time engaged in laying out roads and commencing improvements about the village of La Porte. The work had been commenced early in September and those who were engaged in it were obliged to "camp out" with but slight protection from the night exposure. With good fires, however, they had succeeded in getting along very comfortably until the heavy autumnal rains came on when it was found that better protection would have to be secured or the work abandoned. The most feasible plan that suggested itself was to procure if possible sufficient lumber from some of the abandoned buildings at Eagles Mere, to build a small cabin. To accomplish this depended upon our being able to obtain consent of Judge Jones. To get to Eagles Mere, the logs, underbrush, and other obstructions had to be removed from the road and the task for two boys was not an easy one. They accomplished it, however, and finally arrived at the "Glass Works." The consent of the Judge was readily given and from that time there existed a strong attachment between him and the writer.

To describe his personal appearance would be difficult. Every expression and action outspoke a high type of manhood, head and hand alike being ready for constant service. In size he was rather above medium height, limbs well proportioned, with joint and muscle so kept in use as to be able at all times to do its best work. His face wore a pleasing expression, although somewhat marred by a heavy scar extending the length of one cheek. In conversation he could readily adapt himself to any company and was always to a high degree entertaining and instructive. He enjoyed the esteem of the other settlers as well as the confidence of public men in other parts of the State.

The question of creating a new county was under consideration when he came to the county and the location of the county seat became the question of all-absorbing

interest. Its final location was the result of his self-sacrificing services. His services were soon in demand for the care of wild lands for non-residents and the work incident to the opening up of new settlements and his work in this connection was a great help in developing the entire county. Life at Eagles Mere at that time was destitute of the comforts now enjoyed. His efforts in cultivating the lands upon which are now to be seen handsome cottages and extensive hotels, were far from being successful from a financial standpoint. A number of families from Philadelphia and vicinity came up, but not being accustomed to endure the privations and hardships, to a considerable extent abandoned the undertaking. The expense of their support absorbed his income. In no part of his life can we better see the true manhood of his nature than during the time of these struggles. Heavy taxes had to be met on a large amount of property or all would be lost. This was before the days in which land-holders could resort to the sale of bark or timber or engage successfully in the manufacture of more lumber than was needed for home consumption. He believed that his timber lands would ultimately become very valuable and he wished to retain them until that time came. Among other noteworthy undertakings was the establishment of the Eagles Mere Academy, for several years in charge of the Rev. J. N. Lunkens. This school was largely patronized by those who had an acquaintance with Col. Jones in Philadelphia, and to some extent by young men in this section who have filled useful places among us. Judge Jones was active in political matters but held no office of profit until the rebellion demanded his military services. When the war opened, his courage and capability to command were at once recognized and he was chosen as a leader to go to the front with our brave boys in the defense of their country. His position as an advocate of active measures to put down the rebellion when in its incipient state was well understood by those in authority during Buchanan's administration and readily secured to him the appointment of Colonel of the Fifty-eighth regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers which did such effective service during the whole war. His physical training and temperate habits gave him the strong constitution that enabled him to endure more fatigue than any other man in his regiment.



In closing this brief sketch I should fail to mention the tie that bound him so closely to many of his acquaintances. He was an earnest and zealous Christian. Among the happy recollections that a fond memory brings to light is one of the pleasant Sabbaths enjoyed with him at Eagles Mere in his home where all united in their Creator's praise. The following was placed upon record by the LaPorte and Eagles Mere Baptist Church, August 23, 1863:

"We mourn with our common country and numerous friends the decease of the noble patriot and fallen hero, J. Richter Jones. Though not a nominal member with us yet the position he formerly occupied in our community, the relation he sustained to us as a church in giving us large support, as well as being an instructor in religion and morals, both by example and precept, and finally by surrendering home and friends and giving himself, a voluntary offering and a faithful martyr to his country in her hour of peril—all demand from us a befitting tribute of grateful recollection." \*\*\*

From, Times  
Phila. Pa.  
 Date, Sept. 7<sup>th</sup> 1893.

THEY GAVE THEIR LAND TO GOD

THE TAXES WERE NOT PAID AND IT WAS SOLD BY THE SHERIFF.

A QUEER OLD DEED UNEARTHED

A Philadelphia Lawyer, Traveling in Sullivan County, Comes Across a Conveyance Giving Four Square Miles of Ground to "Almighty God and His Heirs"—The Freak of a Religious Enthusiast.

Four square miles of land in Sullivan county, whose title was vested in "Almighty God," has been sold for taxes. The deed in which the conveyance of the land in question was made by an old farmer near Celestia, Sullivan county, to "Almighty God and to his heirs in Jesus Messiah," is on record in the County Court at LaPorte, where it has been looked upon as a great curiosity ever

since it was executed in 1864, and where it was recently seen by George B. Carr, the well-known Philadelphia lawyer, who was taking a jaunt through Sullivan county with a party of friends.

Mr. Carr was so deeply interested in the deed and the story connected with it that he ordered a certified copy of the instrument to be taken and forwarded to him in this city. This certified copy has just arrived, and the following copy of it was transcribed yesterday afternoon. That the certified copy is authentic is vouched for beyond a doubt by the signature of the Recorder of Deeds of Sullivan county and his seal, which accompanies the certification upon its back.

#### A QUEER OLD DEED.

The deed is indorsed "Peter E. Armstrong and Hannah, his wife, to Almighty God." It reads as follows:

Know all men by these presents: That I, Peter E. Armstrong, and Hannah, my wife, of the county of Sullivan, and State of Pennsylvania, having redeemed from the inhabitants of earth, by lawful purchase, a certain tract of land within the boundaries herein described, and being fully impressed and taught by the inspired word of God and His Holy Spirit, that His children should not claim to own property of any kind as individuals, but that they should render and consecrate unto God all things they possess, for the common good of His people who are waiting for His Son from heaven and who are willing to live together in holy fellowship, relying upon His word and bounty, and to the end that His saints may be fully separated from the world and gathered together and enjoy that light and liberty which they did in the once faithful days of their theocracy, we do make and establish this deed of conveyance this fourteenth day of June, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-four.

WHEREAS, In consideration of the kind protecting care of Almighty God in the past and present, which we do hereby humbly acknowledge, and for the exceeding great and precious promise of unending life to those who in holy faith and patience wait for the coming of His anointed Son to judge the world; which promise we have received from Him who is Creator and original granter of earth's territory to the children of men.

#### GAVE IT TO GOD AND HIS HEIRS.

We do, by these presents, deed, grant and convey to Almighty God, who inhabiteth eternity, and to his heirs in Jesus Messiah, to the intent that it shall be subjected to bargain and sale by man's cupidity no more forever, all our right and title (by human law), interest and claim of any nature soever in or to all that certain tract of land and improvements thereof, lying and being in the county of Sullivan, and State of Pennsylvania, being our part of a parcel of land, \* \* \* containing four square miles of land, of which we have redeemed about 600 acres; and we do hereby set apart by boundary with intent to redeem the balance of said tract at or before the redemption of the world, as the purchase possession of Jesus Messiah, together with all rights, liberties, privileges and appurtenances whatsoever thereunto belonging to us.

We do grant, deed and convey to said Creator and God of Heaven and earth, and to His heirs in Jesus Messiah for their proper use and behoove forever. In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands and seals the day and year above written.

(Signed) PETER E. ARMSTRONG,  
 HANNAH ARMSTRONG.

#### SOLD FOR THE TAXES.

It is said that Mr. Armstrong and his wife were most devout and pious people during their lifetime, and the deed was executed in a paroxysm of religious mania, in which the



grantor believed that the human race were not individual owners of property, but the trustees of God.

After the deed was placed on record on August 4, 1864, the property it conveyed was allowed to go to rack and ruin for a number of years. Mr. Armstrong lived in a hut upon the ground which was practically a wilderness adjacent to the desolate little village of Celostia. There he died in abject poverty in 1887, his wife, Hannah, dying in 1869. For all these years that the property lay neglected no taxes were paid upon it, and these claims of the county and Commonwealth gradually accumulated until it was found necessary to sell the land to satisfy them. Then arose the difficulty of making the sale according to law. The title vested in "Almighty God" and the impossibility of serving the tax claims was at once realized, but this obstacle was overcome by the posting of notices in the various parts of the property stating that the land thus owned by "Almighty God" would be sold unless the possessor of title satisfied the claims within a certain date. Then came the sale of the property, and it was bought in by Harry Armstrong, the son of the couple, who took and still holds a tax title to it.

From, *Telegraph*  
*Harrisburg Pa.*  
 Date, *Aug. 12* 1893.

#### CONTRIBUTIONS

##### To the History of Sullivan County.

Nearly two years since, in preparing a "Check List of County, Town and Township Histories of Pennsylvania," we found that the only sketch of Sullivan county ever prepared was that in Egle's History of Pennsylvania. All the other counties in the State at one time or another had been written up, either in separate volumes or in connection with others. After some extensive correspondence, arrangements were made for contributions thereto, to be published in *Notes and Queries*, and subsequently in book form for permanent preservation. So far, we have had but little encouragement, owing we believe to the repeated efforts made by publishers to have a history of Sullivan printed in connection with one or more of the adjacent counties. Owing, perchance to the sparse population of the locality, these endeavors have failed, and it is to be hoped that the promised aid will come to us in the near future. We have, however, gathered information which is valuable and interesting—and with the preliminary sketch of the political divisions of the county, herewith given, the remaining data will follow in consecutive numbers.

#### I.

#### Political Divisions of Sullivan County.

Sullivan county is a part of the purchase made of the Indians November 5, 1768, which was a large strip of territory extending diagonally across the State from the northeast to the southwest corner, which is at the present time divided into about twenty counties. When the first settlement was made within the present bounds of this county it was a part of Northumberland. Northumberland was organized March 27th, 1772, from parts of Lancaster, Cumberland, Berks, Bedford and Northampton. Soon after the first settlement was made here, Lycoming was organized. This took place April 13th, 1796, it being formed from a part of Northumberland. At the time Lycoming was erected, all the territory now comprised in Sullivan and much of the present bounds of Lycoming, was included in Loyalsock and Muncy townships.

The first road, or rather path, called at that time a pack horse road, was cut across the mountain from Muncy to Hillsgrove, no doubt by surveyors and the pioneer settlers for the purpose of getting in supplies. It was called the "Wallis Road." As early as 1793 another pack horse road was cut out, leaving the Wallis road at the foot of the Allegheny, thence northward to the left of Hunter's Run on through to the forks of the Loyalsock, where Forksville now is situated. This was called the "Courson Road," and was first used by surveyors in bringing in provisions and in traveling to and from their work.

The Genesee road was opened about the beginning of the present century, so called because it afforded the first thoroughfare for emigrants from Southern Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia to the rich valley of the Genesee river, then the great "Eldorado." It was not opened for that purpose, however, but for the purpose of inducing settlers to come into this vast region, then almost an unbroken wilderness, and make their homes here. This land had lately been surveyed as has just been indicated, and was now in the hands of speculators, principally Joseph Priestly, John Vaughn, Phineas Bond, Thomas Barclay, and others. Wm. Ellis, living on Wolf Run, two miles north of Muncy, and being at that time a deputy land surveyor and a man of great influence, seemed to have been the most active agent in procuring subscriptions and locating the Genesee road. This road, like the greater part of the roads in this State laid out at an early day, was located without much regard to feasibility. It ran from Muncy, then called Pennsburg, passed Mr. Ellis' farm, John Robb's, a mile beyond, to Abraham Webster's, near Hunterville, thence climbing the Allegheny by Highlaxd lake, skirted the summit of the mountain for some distance and then descended to the Valley of Ogdonia creek, down it to the Loyalsock; thence following the 'Sock to the mouth of Elk creek, which it followed, crossing and recrossing to Lincoln Falls; thence crossing the ridge it reached



the valley of King's creek near Thomas King's; following this stream for some distance it then curved eastward, passing near where Charles Hugo now resides and soon began to ascend by steep and heavy grades to the summit of Burnett's Ridge, near Kahill's, and then descended by very heavy grades to the narrow valley of Millstone Run, down this to the Schrader branch, and finally connected with another road running along Towanda creek at a point known at that time as Dougherty's tavern, near Greenwood.

At the instance of the few settlers then living along the Loyalsock and hills adjacent, especially in what is now Elkland township, represented by William Ellis as their agent, a petition was presented to the court of quarter sessions of Lycoming county at November term, 1802, representing substantially that they had recently opened at their own expense a new road through the northeastern portion of the county, a large portion of which would be very inconvenient for the supervisors of said township to keep in repair, and proposing and praying that a new township might be formed by boundaries suggested in said petition. The court erected the new township and called it Shrewsbury, and subsequently, at the next or second term of court, appointed William Benjamin, an old surveyor, to run and mark the lines of the new township. But this was still unsatisfactory to the new settlement on the Loyalsock and its tributaries near whom the new road ran, as it was ascertained that a majority of the voters would remain south of the Allegheny. Therefore, before William Benjamin had completed his survey of the lines of Shrewsbury township, the inhabitants north of the mountain engaged him to run a line for the division of Shrewsbury for the purpose of erecting a new township out of the western portion. In the records of the next term of court are found two petitions, differing in some respects as to the boundary, but each asking for the division of Shrewsbury township. These two petitions are endorsed "Granted--per curiam," but as they differ in describing the boundary, which one, or can either, be deemed official? To mend the matter, an old paper in the hand writing of Wm. Ellis is found filed with these petitions which purports to be the "Boundary of Elkland Township," but which does not agree with either petition as to boundary, and as it is not approved by the court, yet is the only evidence of the name of the new township extant.

Allow us here to make a query, that no doubt some of our friends of the legal profession will be ready to answer at once. Has Sullivan county now a township without a legal name? Elkland township, as we shall call it at least until it has a legal name, comprised at that time, besides its present territory, Fox and Hillsgrove in this county and Plunkett Creek, Cascade, McIntire and McNett townships in Lycoming.

Sullivan county contains 434 square miles of territory, or 277,760 acres. It was chartered March 15th, 1847, and was formed from Lycoming. The intention of the parties most interested in forming this new county was to annex it to a portion of Southern Bradford and make Dushore the county seat, but though they succeeded in having a new county formed, no portion was taken from Bradford, and though Dushore was at first the county seat, it was moved to Laporte in 1850.

John Persun, of Cherry, W. A. Mason, formerly of Monroe, but afterward residing at Laporte, and John Laird, from Lairdsville, were the surveyors appointed to run the lines of the new county. Michael Stackhouse from Lycoming, Joseph Smith, from Cherry, John B. Wilcox, of Fox, and C. M. Boyles and Joseph Woodhead, of Elkland, were chosen to assist in the survey. Of this stalwart crew only two survive, viz: Charles M. Boyles and Joseph Smith.

At this date the county comprised the townships of Cherry, Davidson, Elkland, Forks, Fox, Shrewsbury and Plunkett's Creek. The township of Plunkett's

Creek being divided by running the county line, the part in this county was soon changed to Hillsgrove. The name is derived from a tract of land so called in the original patent from the State "Hillsgrove," it being the first land located in what is now Sullivan, viz.: in 1776. It has lately been owned by Richard Biddle, Esq.

Colley was formed in 1849 from parts of Cherry and Davidson, and named in honor of Judge William Colley. Laporte was formed in 1850 from portions of Cherry, Davidson and Shrewsbury. Laporte Borough was organized in 1853, Dushore in 1859, and Forksville in 1880. An attempt to divide Cherry and Davidson townships has recently been made without success, but an additional voting precinct has been formed in Cherry at Bernice, in Colley at Lopez, and in Davidson at Jamison City.

The census of 1850 was taken by the late William J. Eldred, Esq., of Elkland, which gave the following results:

TOWNSHIPS.	MALES.	FEMALES.	TOTAL.	NO. OF DWELLINGS.
Colley.....	97	87	174	38
Cherry.....	820	786	1,606	188
Davidson.....	267	270	537	90
Elkland.....	210	199	409	73
Forks.....	173	170	343	61
Fox.....	121	112	233	41
Plunkett's Crk (Hillsgrove)...	105	94	199	35
Shrewsbury....	81	114	175	36
Total .....	1,864	1,832	3,696	502









